

REMARKS

Claims 1-10 have been examined. Claim 4 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, and claims 1, 7 and 9 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b). Also, the Examiner has indicated that claims 2-6, 8 and 10 contain allowable subject matter.

I. Preliminary Matters

The Examiner has not acknowledged the drawings filed on February 24, 2004. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to indicate, in the next Office Action, whether such drawings are acceptable.

Also, the Examiner has objected to claims 1-10 due to minor informalities. Accordingly, Applicant has amended the claims in a manner believed to overcome the objections. Such changes do not narrow the scope of the claims and are not made in view of the prior art.

II. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph

The Examiner has rejected claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite. Accordingly, Applicant has amended claim 4 in a manner believed to overcome the rejection.

III. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 7 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,939,616 to Ito et al. ("Ito").

Claims 2-4 and 8 have been rewritten into independent form. Further, claims 1, 7 and 9 have been canceled from the application. Since the Examiner has indicated that claims 2-4 and 8 contain allowable subject matter, claims 2-4 and 8 and their dependent claims should be allowed.

IV. Allowable Subject Matter

As set forth above, the Examiner has indicated that claims 2-6, 8 and 10 contain allowable subject matter.

V. Newly Added Claims

Applicant has added claim 11 to provide more varied protection for the present invention. Applicant submits that claim 11 is patentable at least by virtue of its dependency.

VI. Conclusion

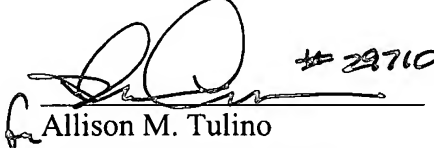
In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Application No.: 10/784,788

Attorney Docket No.: Q79388

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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